

**The Book of the Confraternity of the Holy Name of Jesus  
In Latin and Italian, illuminated manuscript on parchment  
Northern Italy (Genoa), c. 1500-1582**

38 folios on parchment, contemporary foliation in brown ink, I-XXXVIII (first leaf unnumbered, omitting XXXI), modern foliation in pencil, 1-38, lacking one leaf (collation i<sup>s</sup> [+1, one leaf with the miniature added in the beginning, -7, one leaf lacking after f. 5, with loss of text] ii-iii<sup>s</sup> iv<sup>s</sup> v<sup>4</sup> vi<sup>3</sup> vii<sup>2</sup>), no catchwords or signatures, ruled in hardpoint (justification 140 x 87 mm.), written in black ink in gothic textualis bookhand on 25 lines, capitals highlighted in yellow throughout, initials one to four lines high alternating in red or blue throughout, two 7-line initials in blue on grounds of red penwork incorporating the IHS monogram (ff. 2, 15), TWO MINIATURES (equivalent to eight lines) with the IHS monogram (ff. 2, 14v), a FULL-PAGE MINIATURE OF THE CRUCIFIXION (f. 1v), a hole and a tear in the lower margin of the miniature, several small holes in the last two leaves, stains and signs of use throughout, text occasionally faded, quires are stitched and sewn on cords, but the volume is now unbound. Dimensions 191 x 135 mm.

Confraternities (societies or brotherhoods united for a particular purpose, most often charitable or religious) played an essential role in the lives of many people in late medieval and Renaissance Europe. Our manuscript records the liturgical services and statutes of a confraternity from Genoa. Its formal script and illumination (perhaps copied from a contemporary altarpiece) set it apart from the more common practical administrative documents surviving from confraternities.

#### PROVENANCE

1. The manuscript was made for the Compagnia del Nome di Jesu (the Company of the Name of Jesus), a lay brotherhood, in Genoa, at the beginning of the sixteenth century. New regulations were added to the book at different moments in the sixteenth century, the last dating after 25 February 1582 (see Text). The confraternity met at the Franciscan church of Santa Maria della Pace (mentioned on ff. 36 and 36v), located in the neighborhood of San Vincenzo in Genoa, near Porta degli Archi; the church was demolished in the nineteenth century.
2. Sixteenth-century ownership inscriptions of Giacomo Saluzzo, of a noble Genoese and Neapolitan family, on ff. 21v and 38.
3. Inscription of Henrietta Katherine Burrell, née Brooke-Pechell (1829-1880), wife of Sir Percy Burrell (1812-1876), British conservative politician, recording her gift of the book to the Bishop of Chichester: "From Henrietta K. Burrell To the Bishop of Chichester this book is given as a remembrance of his attached friend Percy Burrell. June 2nd 1877."
4. Richard Durnford (1802-1895), Bishop of Chichester.

#### TEXT

f. 1, (page very darkened and rubbed; the text added at the end of the sixteenth century no longer legible) "Qui...".

ff. 2-4, incipit, "Pater Noster. In nomine domini nostri Jesu christi benedicti. A\*M\*E\*N. Fratelli Carissimi, in el principio del nostro divino officio, secondo la bona usanza humilmente e con

devocione reccorreremo alla gloriosa vergine maria, madre del nostro signore jesu: fontana de gratia, conforto et speranza delli peccatori. Che li piace pregare il suo dulcissimo jesu redemptore nostro e aquello a presentare questo nostro presente e devote officio, facto per questa benedetta compagnia del nome di jesu a salvatione delle anime e corpi nostri e de tutto l'universo mondo..." (Dear Brothers, at the beginning of our divine service, according to the good custom, humbly and devoutly we respond to the glorious Virgin Mary, mother of our Lord Jesus, fountain of grace, comfort and hope of sinners, that we wish to pray to her sweetest Jesus, our redeemer, to whom we present our devout office, made for this blessed company of the Name of Jesus, to save our souls and bodies, and the whole universe); "Ave Maria... *Versus*. Deus in adiutorium meum intende...";

Pater Noster, an opening salutation in Italian, followed by the Office of the confraternity.

ff. 4-6v, Litanies, including at the final position of male saints, Bernardino of Siena;

ff. 7-8, Office continues with prayers, benedictions and lessons;

ff. 8-11, Thirteen prayers in Italian, "*In cominciano le devotissime preghere. Fratelli carissimi. Devotamente se torneremo...*";

f. 11, The *Salve regina* prayer;

ff. 11v-12, The *Te Deum* hymn;

ff. 12-14, Prayers in Latin and Italian;

ff. 14v-24v, Statutes and rulebook of the Confraternity in Italian, including regulations about attending Mass, praying, confessing, taking communion, the election of the prior and of members, visiting the sick, fines to be paid for inebriation ("*de quelli chi vano in taverna*"), adultery ("*delli concubinarii*") or usury ("*delli usurarii*");

ff. 25-26v, Office of the Dead;

ff. 26v-32, Litanies (Bernardino of Siena and Nicholas of Tolentino at the end of male saints), followed by prayers in Latin and Italian, Psalm 51, and more prayers;

ff. 32v-33v, [Prayers in Latin added later in the sixteenth century], incipit, "*Deus qui manus tuas et pedes tuos et totum corpus tuum...*" (crossed out); incipit, "*Ostende nobis domine misericordiam tuam...*";

ff. 34-37, Additions to the statutes and regulations in Italian, including a regulation to read a work of Ludovico Pittorio (c. 1454-1525), who had recently translated several biblical texts and commentaries into Italian (f. 34) and a regulation added in November 1572 at the time of prior Battista Riccio and the sub-prior Bartolomeo Compiano (f. 35). The final chapter xxxvi (ff. 36v-37), added to the book some time after 25 February 1582, concerns the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, *Della festa della purissima Concettione di Maria Vergine Signora nostra*, a dogma endorsed by the Council of Trent in 1545-1563. The chapter begins by explaining that the city

of Genoa was freed from the plague in 1580 thanks to the intercession of the Virgin, incipit, "Raccordevole la benedetta Compagnia del nome di Giesu dell' inesplicabile benefitio ricevuto dall' infinita bonta di dio d'esser stata liberata dalla peste la nostra citta di Genova l'anno 1580 per intercessione della sacratissima Madre e Vergine Maria" (f. 36v).

ff. 37v-38v, Blank, with ownership inscriptions, and on f. 38v "Jesus maria. Ave maria gratia plena dominus tecum benedita [sic]."

## ILLUSTRATION

Full-page miniature of the Crucifixion, f. 1v, drawn in brown ink and highlighted with washes in blue, green and brown tones. The miniature may well reproduce an altarpiece in one of the twelve chapels of the church of Santa Maria della Pace, which was decorated with numerous works of art. It bears a striking similarity to the muscular Crucifixion (c. 1560) attributed to the Genoese mannerist painter Luca Cambiaso (1527-1586), now in the Diocesan Museum in Genoa. Our miniature is painted on a singleton, which was added to the beginning of the first quire probably around 1560.

The Compagnia del Nome di Jesu in Genoa, for whom the manuscript was made, was likely inspired by the sermons and devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus advocated by Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444), canonized in 1450. The IHS monogram appears four times in the manuscript, and in the two small miniatures it is represented inside a blazing sun (ff. 2, 14v), the same form as on the wooden panels used by Bernardino during his immensely popular sermons (the same iconography that the Jesuits would adopt in 1541). The Franciscan preacher from Siena would raise the tablet at the end of his sermon, captivating the crowd with the golden sunburst and the letters forming the name of Jesus.

Confraternities originated to prepare members for the afterlife and salvation through pious acts. Their function in late medieval and Renaissance cities, and some rural districts, however, were much broader. In Miri Rubin's expansive definition, medieval confraternities were formed "to promote welfare and security within a framework governed by an idiom of kinship, entered into and forged by ritual, and bound by mutual obligation" (1993, p. 186). Confraternities oversaw religious education, provided dowries, and undertook acts of charity, founded orphanages and hospitals, and organized funerals. Some guilds created confraternities as offshoots of their trade activities. There are many active confraternities in Italy today, such as the Misericordia confraternity in Florence, which maintains their ancient tradition of helping the sick by acting as part-time ambulance-men.

In Genoa there were as many as 134 confraternities in the period 1480-1582 (Black 1989, p. 55). The manuscript was made during a key transitional period, when confraternities expanded in numbers and diversified their activities in response to religious and socio-economic crises. There was an increasing emphasis on the individual's religious role and activity in the world, and confraternities were fully involved in the social, political and cultural life of the community. The regulations in the manuscript show that the Compagnia del Nome di Jesu confraternity in Genoa stressed the importance of moral life, discipline, regular confession and communion, as well as charitable activities. Confraternities varied widely in size. A Lombard rosary society had only four members (all female), whereas in Genoa the Sodalizio della Vergine del Rosario had about 1,200 members after an intense preaching mission by the Jesuits (Black, 1989, pp. 51-52).

Although we do not know the size of the Compagnia del Nome di Jesu in Genoa, our manuscript states that on February 25, 1582 members of the brotherhood had gathered in good numbers at the usual place, the church of Santa Maria della Pace ("in buon numero radunata," f. 36v).

In recent years there have been several studies on Italian confraternities, especially those in Florence and Venice, but less is written about confraternities in Genoa, despite the size and importance of this city with about 60,000 inhabitants throughout the sixteenth century. Survival rate of archival material relating to Italian confraternities is poor (Black, 1989, p. 19), which renders the evidence provided by this manuscript even more precious. The manuscript also provides material for ecclesiastical and religious history, social anthropology, as well as art and cultural history.

## LITERATURE

Black, C. *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century*, Cambridge, 1989.

Grendi, E. *La repubblica aristocratica dei genovesi: Politica, carità e commercio fra Cinque e Seicento*, Bologna, 1987.

Rubin, Miri. "Fraternities and Lay Piety in the Later Middle Ages," *Einungen und Bruderschaften in der spätmittelalterlichen Stadt*, ed. Peter Johaneck, Cologne, 1993, pp. 185-198.

Terpstra, N. (ed.) *The Politics of Ritual Kinship: Confraternities and Social Order in Early Modern Italy*, Cambridge, 2007.

Weissman, R. *Ritual Brotherhood in Renaissance Florence*, New York and London, 1982.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Bernardino da Siena, Del nome di Gesu

[http://www.donbosco-torino.it/ita/Kairos/Santo\\_del\\_mese/05-Maggio/S\\_Bernardino\\_da\\_Siena.html](http://www.donbosco-torino.it/ita/Kairos/Santo_del_mese/05-Maggio/S_Bernardino_da_Siena.html)

On Confraternities

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04223a.htm>

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